

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 15234 061622Z

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ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 EA-11 ISO-00 SSO-00 FMC-04 OMB-01

INRE-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 ACDA-19 IO-14 DLOS-06 COA-02 CG-00 TRSE-00

SCI-06 DRC-01 SAJ-01 INT-08 NIC-01 /173 W

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4430

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

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USDOC FOR MARAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRN ENRG UR

SUBJ: SHIP BUNKER SHORTAGE

REF: A) STATE 237149; B) BLACKWELL-AVERIN TELEX, DEC. 4

C) MOSCOW 15110

1. IN ABSENCE OF MARITIME MINISTRY FOREIGN RELATIONS CHIEF AVERIN, ECON/COMM CONSELOR MELENCAMP WAS RECEIVED DEC 6 BY AVERIN'S DEPUTIES YU. D. GRITSENKO AND V.B. IVANOV TO DISCUSS BUNKER SITUATION. ALSO PRESENT WERE FIRST DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF SOVINFLLOT, M.A. KURBATOV, AND DIRECTOR OF SOVINFLLOT'S SUPPLIES AND BUNKERS DPEARTMENT, B.G. UKRAINTSEV.

2. GRITSENKO EXPRESSED CONSTERNATION AT TONE OF BLACKWELL-AVERIN TELEX (REF B), WHICH HE SAID COULD ONLY COMPLICATE SOVIET-US MARITIME RELATIONS. CLAIMED SOVIETS NOT DISCRIMINATING
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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 15234 061622Z

AGAINST FOREIGN FLAG VESSELS IN PROVISION OF BUNKERS. BECAUSE

OF SHORTAGES ELSEWHERE IN WORLD, DEMAND FOR BUNKER AT SOVIET PORTS HAS INCREASED DRAMATICALLY AND SUPPLY SITUATION IS TIGHT, BUT SHIPS ARE BEING SERVICED IN ORDER OF ARRIVAL AND SOVIET VESSELS ARE TAKING THEIR PLACE IN QUEUE ALONG WITH REST. AS EVIDENCE OF NON-DISCRIMINATORY PROVISION OF BUNKERS TO U.S. SHIPS IN PARTICULAR, UKRAINTSEV CITED CASES OF US FLAG SHIPS "ATLANTIC," "OVERSEAS AVALON," AND "VICTOR", WHICH HE SAID ARE CURRENTLY IN ODESSA AND ARE RECEIVING FUEL (1000, 2000 AND 4000 TONS RESPECTIVELY).

3. KURBATOV SAID THAT ALTHOUGH BUNKERS CONTINUE TO BE AVAILABLE TO FOREIGN VESSELS IN SOVIETS PORTS, CERTAIN CONDITIONS MUST BE MET: VESSELS MUST CABLE NOTIFICATION OF NEEDS TEN DAYS IN ADVANCE TO SOVINFLOT AT PORT, TAKING CARE TO SPECIFY KIND OF FUEL REQUIRED AND COPYING MESSAGE TO SOVINFLOT MOSCOW; FUEL PROVIDED WILL BE LIMITED TO AMOUNT NEEDED FOR OUTWARD VOYAGE (IN CASE OF US VESSELS IN BILATERAL TRADE, QUANTITY WILL BE PROVIDED SUFFICIENT TO REACH FIRST USSR PORT OF CALL). LIMIT IMPOSED BY FACT FOREIGN FLAGS HAVE BEEN TAKING MORE THAN NORMAL NEEDS; UKRAINTSEV CITED CASE OF US FLAG VESSELS "MANHATTAN," WHICH HE SAID HAD RECENTLY LOADED 6000 TONS MORE THAN NEEDED FOR HOMEWARD VOYAGE TO U.S.

4. CLAIMING THAT, IF EITHER PARTY TO US-SOVIET MARITIME AGREEMENT COULD JUSTIFIABLY COMPLAIN ABOUT DISCRIMINATION, IT WOULD BE THE SOVIET UNION, GRITSENKO AND UKRAINTSEV AIRD OLD COMPLAINT ABOUT DENIAL OF BUNKERING TO SOVIET SHIPS ENGAGED IN CUBA AND VIETNAM TRADE (UKRAINTSEV MENTIONED SPECIFICALLY REFUSALS TO BUNKER SOVIET SHIPS BY ESSO, MOBIL OIL AND THE "INDEPENDENT PETROLEUM COMPANY" AT MAURITIUS, ADEN AND ANTIGUA). MORE PERTINENTLY, UKRAINTSEV CLAIMED FESCO SHIP NOW SAILING TO CALIFORNIA PORT HAS BEEN INFORMED IT WILL NOT BE ABLE RECEIVE BUNKER BEFORE JANUARY 5.

5. COMMENT: DISCREPANCY BETWEEN INFORMATION PARAS 2 AND 3 ABOVE AND REPORT OF TOTAL SUSPENSION OF BUNKERING FOR FOREIGN VESSELS TRANSMITTED REF A CANNOT EASILY BE EXPLAINED AS SIMPLE FAILURE OF COMMUNICATION WITHIN SOVIET MARITIME LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 MOSCOW 15234 061622Z

BUREAUCRACY. SOURCE OF INFO REPORTED REF A (IVANOV) RESPONDED TO EMBASSY REQUEST FOR SITUATION REPORT ONLY A FULL DAY AFTER REQUEST WAS MADE, AND IN DOING SO HE STATED EXPLICITLY THAT HE HAD CONSULTED WITH HEAD OF SOVINFLOT BUNKERS DEPARTMENT (PRESUMABLY UKRAINTSEV). MORE LIKELY, EMBASSY REQUEST CAUGHT SOVIET MARITIME OFFICIALS AT MOMENT OF UNCERTAINTY ABOUT HOW TO REACT TO BALLOONING DEMANDS FOR BUNKERS. BLACKWELL'S TELEX, AND PERHAPS

SIMILAR REMONSTRANCES FROM OTHER SOURCES, MAY WELL HAVE
DISCOURAGED INITIAL INCLINATION TOWARD MORE NATIONALISTIC
POLICY.
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